

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough for six or more characters and double brackets for five or less characters; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of conducting an auction for bidding ~~[[off]]~~ on an article or a service, ~~or a person who receives provision of an article or a service,~~ through a network, said method comprising:

a collection step including ~~procedure in which an auction intermediary server provides~~ providing, by a potential bidder through an auction intermediary server, reference information serving as a reference for bidding locating an article or a service offered for bidding to be traded, and transmits transmitting collection information for located articles or services offered for bidding and matching the reference information to terminals through the network to collect bids, wherein the collection information includes an auction requesting to offer an element other than a price; or converted information converted to said element, as an object to be bidden, to terminals through the network,

a bidding step including ~~bid procedure in which said server receives~~ receiving, by the server through the network, bid information communicated by terminals of potential bidders, wherein the bid information includes a bid based on the auction element; including said element or said converted

~~information offered by bidders from terminals of the bidders through communications via the network; and~~

a bid acceptance step including ~~procedure in which said server executes bid processing for finding~~

processing, by the server, the bid information to determine a result of the bidding ~~step with said element included in said bid information or an element derived by converting said converted information, based on [[said]] the~~ bid information, and to select selecting a successful bidder.

2. (Currently Amended) The auction method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a request step including ~~procedure prior to said collection procedure, or between said bid procedure and said bid acceptance procedure, in which a client makes~~

making a request by a seller to offer the article or the service for bidding, wherein ~~in said request procedure, said server prompts~~

prompting the client seller, by the server through a terminal of the client seller, to provide [[offer]] attribute information required to identify [[an]] the article or [[a]] the service offered for bidding, to be traded, and said server ~~receives~~

receiving the request and the information including said attribute information by the server from the terminal of the seller client via the network.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 2, wherein:

in said request procedure, said server prompts the client to offer desired conditions for a trade through the terminal of the client, and receives said request information additionally including said desired trade conditions from the terminal of the client; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes said bid processing with said element in accordance with said desired trade conditions based on said bid information.

5. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 2, wherein:

said server executes said collection procedure for providing said collection information including information used as a reference in conducting a bid, within said request information, on the terminal via said network, to collect bids after said request procedure in which said server receives said request information from the terminal of the client.

6. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 2, wherein:

prior to said request procedure, said server collects the bidders in said collection procedure, and receives an advanced bid for storing said bid information received from the bidder in said bid procedure in a database;

after receiving said advanced bid, said server, upon receipt of said request information from the terminal of the client in said request procedure, executes said bid acceptance procedure in which said server retrieves said bid information on an associated article or service from said database based on said attribute information in said request information, executes said bid processing with said element in said request information or an element converted from said converted information, and transmits a resulting successful bid for display on the terminal of the client;

said server, upon receipt of information from the terminal of the client notifying that the client does not satisfy the resulting successful bid by the advanced bid and again requests a bid, again executes said collection procedure for collecting bidders in said bid procedure after said request procedure, and receives bid information from the bidders and executes said bid acceptance procedure in which said server executes said bid processing with said element in said request information or an element converted from said converted information based on said bid information, and transmits a resulting successful bid for display on the terminal of the client.

7. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 2, wherein:

the client is a person who wants to buy desired information as an article;

in said bid procedure, the bidder is forced to offer information as an article, said information including said element or said converted information converted to said element; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said element or said converted information included in the said information treated as an article is an object to be bidden, and information offered by said successful bidder is traded as an article.

8. (Currently Amended) The auction method according to claim 2, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

in the ~~[[said]] request step, procedure, said server prompts~~

prompting the client seller, by the server through the terminal of the seller, to

[[offer]] provide desired trade conditions, ~~on the terminal of the client, and~~

~~receives said~~

receiving the request information including said desired trade conditions by the

server from the terminal of the ~~client~~ seller;

in the ~~[[said]] collection step, procedure, said server transmits said~~

transmitting, by the server, the desired trade conditions with the collection information as information used as a reference in conducting a bid to the terminal of a bidder to present the ~~[[said]]~~ desired trade conditions to the potential bidders; and

in the ~~[[said]]~~ bid acceptance step, procedure, ~~said server executes said bid processing the bid information with the said element in accordance with said desired trade conditions based on said bid information.~~

9. (Currently Amended) The auction method according to claim 8, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

in ~~[[said]]~~ the request procedure step, ~~said server prompts~~
prompting the seller, by the server on a request screen, to provide the an offer of
said desired trade conditions on said request screen; and
in the bidding step, ~~said bid procedure~~, ~~said server presents said~~
presenting the desired trade conditions by the server on a ~~[[said]]~~ bid screen.

10. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said bid processing executed by said server in said bid acceptance procedure is processing for determining a priority order of respective bidders based on said bid information.

11. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server only executes the bid processing with said element based on said bid information to select a successful bidder by a bid of only said element.

12. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said bid information includes at least one set of three sets consisting of two types of said elements, said converted information convertible to two types of elements, and an element or converted information and a price; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes first bid processing with said element based on said bid information, and executes second bid processing with the price or another element if bidders cannot be narrowed down to a predetermined number of successful bidders.

13. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said bid information includes at least said element or said converted information, and a price as information; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes first bid processing with said price based on said bid information, and executes second bid processing with said element if bidders cannot be narrowed down to a predetermined number of successful bidders.

14. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said bid information includes at least said element or said converted information, and a price as information; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes first bid processing with one of a plurality of elements including the price based on said bid information, further executes second bid processing with another element if bidders cannot be narrowed down to a predetermined number of successful bidders in said first bid, and executes bid processing in a plurality of stages equal to or more than two stages, wherein an element of the bid is sequentially changed until the bidders can be narrowed down to the predetermined number of successful bidders.

15. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes the bid processing with said element based on said bid information to rank bidders in a priority order, thereafter transmits viewing information which enables at least a portion of information including said element in said bid information to be displayed in said priority order for all bidders or only for a portion of higher ranked bidders to the terminal of the client, lists said viewing information in the bidder priority order for each of the bidders and displays a viewing screen on said terminal in a state in which the client can select a successful bidder, and subsequently, upon receipt of bid acceptance information notifying that said successful bidder has been selected from the terminal of the client, said server determines the bidder indicated in said bid acceptance information as a successful bidder.

16. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said auction method is a time auction method for conducting an auction with time specified as said element, comprising:

said bid procedure in which said server prompts a bidder to enter bid information including the time on a bid screen displayed on a terminal of the bidder, and receives said bid information from the bidder; and

said bid acceptance procedure in which said server executes the bid processing with the time based on bid information.

17-42. (Canceled).

43. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said auction method is a numerical value auction method wherein said element is a unit for handling said article or said

service, or a numerical value represented by an attribute unit for use in representing attributes of performance, nature, components and so on;

in said bid procedure, said server prompts the bidder to offer bid information including said numerical value on said request screen displayed on a terminal of the bidder, and receives bid information including said numerical value from the terminal of the bidder; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes said bid processing with said numerical value in accordance with a bid acceptance condition based on said numerical value.

44-50. (Canceled).

51. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 2, wherein said auction method is an evaluation auction method, wherein said bid information includes said element or said converted information, said element is an evaluation numerical value for evaluating said article or said service as to whether said article or said service satisfies requirements of the client, said converted information is information convertible to said evaluation numerical value, and bid processing is executed with said evaluation numerical value,

in said request procedure, said server prompts the client to offer requirements of the client for said article or said service on said request screen, and receives request information including said requirement information from the terminal of the client;

in said bid procedure, said server prompts a bidder to offer an evaluation numerical value or said converted information as said element on said bid screen displayed on a terminal of the bidder, and receives bid information including said evaluation numerical value or said converted information from the terminal of the bidder; and

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server executes said bid processing with said evaluation numerical value or an evaluation numerical value calculated by converting said

converted information in accordance with a requirement condition derived from requirement information of the client based on said bid information.

52-92. (Canceled).

93. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

a buyer, who is either a successful bidder determined through said bid acceptance procedure or a trading partner, settles a trade with a seller through a net banking.

94. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

an auction system for implementing said auction method via a network, a net banking system, and a distribution net system are interconnected through the network, wherein a buyer, who is either a successful bidder determined through said bid acceptance procedure or a trading partner, settles a trade with a seller through said net banking system, and the seller performs a trade by delivering an article to an article receiving place dispersed in respective regions of said distribution system.

95. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 94, wherein:

paying-in of a buyer to the net banking system is made by transferring a price to a seller after confirmation of an article preserved in said distribution network system.

96. (Withdrawn) An auction system for use in the auction method according to claim 1, comprising:

a terminal of a client for the client to transmit request information including attribute information and a desired trading condition for said article or said service to a server for looking for a trading partner of said article or said service;

said server for presenting at least a portion, including the desired trading condition, of said request information received from the terminal of the client, and for providing said portion to a plurality of terminals via the network to ask for provision of an element other than the price or converted information converted to said element as an object to be bidden; and

a terminal of a bidder for transmitting bid information including an element or converted information offered by the bidder to said server via the network,

wherein said server comprises successful bid determination means for narrowing down to a bidder who offers an element of the value which most satisfies said desired trading condition based on the bid information received from said terminals of bidders as a successful bidder.

97. (Withdrawn) An auction intermediary server for use in the auction method according to claim 1,

wherein said server displays said request screen on the terminal of the client who looks for a trading partner of an article or a service via a network, receives request information including attribute information and a desired trading condition of the article or the service from said terminal via the network, and provides said bid screen presenting said attribute information and said desired trading condition to terminals via the network for bidders to reference said bid screen; and

said server comprises successful bid determination means for receiving bid information including an element from the terminals of bidders via the network, and narrowing down bidders to the one who offers an element of the value which most satisfies said desired trading condition.

98-102. (Canceled).

103. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is a trading element for determining a manner of trading said article or said service.

104. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is an element for determining a degree of restriction imposed by the bidder to a client who is a trading partner of the bidder when said article or said service is traded.

105. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said auction method is an auction method performed through a communication via a network for bidding off an article or a service or a person who receives provision of an article or a service, said method comprising:

- a collection procedure in which an auction intermediary server presents requirements associated with an attribute of an article or a service to be traded by a terminal through a communication via the network and prompts bidders to offer an attribute which can be offered by each of bidders to collect bids;

- a bid procedure in which said server receives bid information including said attribute offered by the bidders from terminals of the bidders via the network; and

- a bid acceptance procedure in which said server executes bid processing for identifying a bidder who offers the most preferred attribute in accordance with a priority condition determined by said requirements based on said bid information to select a successful bidder based on a result of said bid processing.

106. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said requirements are desired conditions indicated by a plurality of attributes of said article or said service, and said attribute in said bid information is offered as a plurality of attributes.

107. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said requirements are desired conditions describing desires indirectly identifying an attribute of said article or said service;

in said bid acceptance procedure, said server identifies a pertinent attribute from said desired condition, and executes evaluation processing for evaluating whether or not an attribute pertinent to said attribute identified from said desired conditions of said plurality of attributes included in said bid information satisfies said desired conditions and executes the bid processing for narrowing down to highly evaluated bidders based on a result of said evaluation processing; and

in a bid acceptance procedure, said server selects a bidder who offers bid information including the attribute that most satisfies said desired conditions as a successful bidder.

108. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element other than the price is an element which is not equivalent to a bid of a unit price of said article or said service.

109. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element other than the price is an element which cannot be converted to the price.

110. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is an attribute of an article or a service.

111. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is an attribute which cannot be converted to a price of an article or a service.

112. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein an element other than the price is an element other than the price, the value of which does not directly affect the price.

113. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is at least one of time, position, distance, length, area, volume, quantity, weight, and evaluation numerical value.

114. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is other than price and other than quantity.

115. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein said element is time or position.

116. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein:

said element in said bid information received from the terminal of the bidder in said bid procedure is time, and said server executes the bid processing with the time based on said bid information in said bid acceptance procedure.

117-118. (Canceled).

119. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 14, wherein said first bid processing includes executing bid processing with an element other than the price.

120. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 1, wherein
said server makes an investigation on an article based on bid information offered by the bidder and provides investigation information on the article to the client.

121. (Withdrawn) The auction method according to claim 120, wherein contents of the investigation made on an article based on the bid information offered by the bidder is sales prediction of the article.